SECNAV Seeks Innovators and Problem Solvers

By Navy Office of Information

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Department of the Navy (DON) is one of the most talented and resourceful expeditionary forces in the world and Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Ray Mabus, would like to recognize the ingenuity Sailors, Marines and DON civilians showcase every day.

"I want the entire workforce, from the most senior admirals, generals and civilian executives to recruits and officer candidates, to look for ways to improve their organizations and accomplish their missions," said Mabus. "Also, continue to push to develop capabilities and concepts that make us more agile and resilient regardless of challenges on our horizon."

YOKOSUKA, Japan (April 20, 2011) Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) the Honorable Ray Mabus speaks to Sailors and Marines from units involved in Operation Tomodachi during an all-hands call at Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Todd Macdonald/Released)

The 2016 SECNAV Innovation Awards recognize personnel who have made significant achievements in one of eight different categories. Also, new to this year's awards is a trophy design contest. DON personnel can enter the contest as an individual or as a member of a two-person team.

"Across military and corporate organizations, the most successful teams use the talents organic to their workforce to innovatively solve important problems," said Rob Marshall, acting director of DON's strategy and innovation. "We want to challenge and empower our force to do the same and these awards are one way we can recognize extraordinary work."

Innovators can distinguish themselves in the following areas:

   * **Innovation Leadership**: Recognizes top naval leaders (military or civilian) who inspire innovation within their organization or team. This can be done by creating an environment that fosters innovation or by removing unnecessary barriers that prevent it from occurring.

* Innovation Catalyst: Identifies the accomplishments of an individual who has made a significant impact to an organization by inspiring others to innovate or by directly supporting the innovative work of others.

* Data Analytics: Recognizes data savvy workforce members who implemented new approaches for using data analytics to improve performance, support decision making or provide meaningful insight to existing processes.

* Technology Development: Highlights DON achievements in the creation of new or improved hardware, software, or tool(s), including, but not limited to: Additive Manufacturing, Robotics, Human-Machine Teaming, Wearables, Virtual Reality, Unmanned Systems and Renewable Energy.

* Automated Process Development: Identifies members of the DON workforce who implemented new approaches to processes or procedures through the use of automation or artificial intelligence that significantly advance mission accomplishment, potentially including processes developed in support of new technology adoption.

* Innovation Scholar (PME/MIDN): These two subcategories recognize top academic achievements by naval officers and enlisted personnel in professional military education (PME) programs and future naval officers currently in commissioning programs (e.g., USNA and NROTC Midshipmen). Academic faculty should nominate top academic papers focused on the future operating environment and emerging operational concepts and capabilities, with an emphasis on human-machine teaming.

* Enlisted Innovator: Identifies the top ideas of our enlisted Sailors or Marines. It is widely known that those closest to the problems often have the best solutions. This award category is submitted, verified and judged by enlisted Sailors and Marines for enlisted Sailors and Marines.

* Outside of the Box: Recognizes innovative contributions that are cross cutting or that do not neatly align to any of the previously mentioned award categories.

The eligibility period for the 2016 awards is from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2016. Commands can nominate worthy innovators by completing the nomination form at http://www.secnav.navy.mil/innovation. The deadline for submissions is Dec. 31. Winners will be announced in March.